

congressman

**PETE
STARK**

**13th District
107th Congress**

UPDATE



Washington, D.C.
March 2002

Dear Friends:

President Bush has submitted a budget outlining his spending priorities for next year. A year ago, this country enjoyed a record surplus of 5.6 trillion dollars. With those resources, we could have strengthened Social Security, provided a prescription drug benefit to our seniors, improved education for our children, protected the environment, enhanced women's rights and extended benefits to the unemployed. We also could have used those resources to bolster our nation's security. Instead, the Administration pushed a tax cut through the Congress that wastes our prosperity on those who need it least. The Administration's new budget only makes things worse.

This budget woefully under-funds critical programs that Americans count on in their every-day lives. Important national priorities, such as quality schools and environmental protection, get only rhetorical mention in this budget, but not meaningful funding. Worst of all, the President has called for additional tax cuts. This would hamper our ability to take care of our citizens for years and years to come.

I am concerned by the President's spending plan because it does not reflect the priorities of most Americans. Please take a look at the enclosed "budget poll" and let me know your priorities.

Sincerely,

PETE STARK

Stark Fights for Medicare Rx Benefit

Prescription drugs are an integral part of medical treatment today. Diseases that required surgery are now treated outside of the hospital through medications. Despite this, Medicare still fails to provide a prescription drug benefit. That is a disgrace!

Prescription drugs should be covered in the same manner as doctors' visits and hospital stays. That is what seniors need and deserve.

Unfortunately, the President's budget does not provide the money for a prescription drug benefit. In fact, his budget commits three-times more money for additional tax cuts for wealthy Americans than it does for a Medicare prescription drug benefit. This speaks volumes about the Administration's priorities. These tax cuts are borrowed from the Medicare and Social Security Trust Funds. I strongly disagree with this practice. Those trust funds belong to America's seniors and should only be used to protect

their economic security. President Bush has linked money for a prescription drug benefit to Medicare "reforms." But the President's reform just shifts more health care costs to seniors. I oppose any attempt to weaken our commitment to quality, universal health cover-



age for our nation's seniors. Medicare is a program that works. We should be building on it, not trying to tear it down. I will work in Congress so that a real Medicare prescription drug benefit can be enacted. The President enjoys a meaningful drug benefit and so should America's seniors.

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... from my mailbox

Dear Pete,
Do not support the Bush Administration's decision to allow states to classify a fetus as an "unborn child".
Dolores, Fremont

Dear Dolores,
I firmly oppose this decision.

Dear Pete,
Vote for the Shays-Meehan campaign finance reform bill.
James, Milpitas

Dear James,
I voted for it and was pleased to see it pass.

Dear Pete,
We think a special prosecutor should be appointed to investigate all issues pertaining to the political activity and bankruptcy of Enron.
Joyce and Jeffrey,
San Leandro

Dear Joyce and Jeffrey,
I couldn't agree more.

Dear Pete,
Thank you for cosponsoring the Alaska Rainforest Conservation Act. This will protect two of the last great wild places in America.
Sharon, Hayward

Dear Sharon,
You're welcome!

New Education Budget Leaves Children Behind

President Bush promised to make education a priority, a commitment which I share. Unfortunately, the President reneged on his promise by not fully funding education in his budget.

Last year, I voted for the “No Child Left Behind Act of 2001,” a historic elementary and secondary education reform bill. This bill authorizes increased funding for schools, holds our schools accountable for providing quality education, and provides additional funding to enhance teacher training. The bill was passed with strong bipartisan support.

With this historical commitment

to improving education, I had hoped that Congress and the President would allocate the nec-

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essary resources for carrying out the initiatives in the bill. This budget, however, falls far short.

The Administration’s budget cuts \$90 million from the education reform bill that was signed into law. The budget freezes efforts to recruit and train teachers and reduce class

sizes. Moreover, the budget only increases the Education for the Disadvantaged program by a minimal amount, \$5 billion short of the promise made in the No Child Left Behind Act. This budget, in fact, leaves 250,000 children behind because it only helps a fraction of the children expected to enter poverty this year.

This is not the time to go back on our promise to improve the education of our children. Improving education requires more than just words. It requires a strong monetary commitment. I will work to improve this portion of the budget and provide meaningful funding for education.



Congressman Stark meets with students from Hopkins Junior High School. The school had the 11th highest score among junior high schools in the California Standardized Testing and Reporting (STAR) Program.

Stark Questions Soaring Defense Spending

The President has proposed an increase of \$43 billion in defense for the upcoming year—15% more than what we spent per year during the Cold War.

While I support necessary resources to protect our country from terrorist threats, the Administration’s budget reads more like a defense contractor’s wish list than a realistic analysis of our nation’s defense needs. Of this increased spending, only \$5.3 billion would go directly to fighting the “War on Terrorism.” As

for the rest: \$12 billion would be used to purchase redundant fighter aircraft, \$2.5 billion would be used to purchase a cold war era nuclear attack submarine, and \$7.8 billion would be spent on a national missile defense system.

To make matters worse, the President wants to fund his defense increase by taking money from the Medicare and Social Security Trust Funds. The Administration has proposed spending reductions for the Department of Education, the Environmental Protection Agency,

and the Department of Justice. These departments play a critical role in educating our children, protecting the environment, and keeping police officers on the streets.

Protecting our nation’s security is of critical importance, but defense spending is not the only component of national security. The unnecessary spending in the President’s defense budget is certainly cause for concern. You can count on me to scrutinize these proposals and to vote for a sensible defense budget.

STARK BUDGET POLL—2003

The budget sets federal government priorities. I try to represent your views in my votes on the budget and the various appropriations bills. In past years, thousands of you have responded to my questionnaires indicating **your** general budget priorities.

Please help me again this year and tell me how you would allocate key components of the nation's budget. I urge you to take a moment to fill out the chart below indicating how you would change the President's priorities. Please send your response to the address below.

PRESIDENT'S PROPOSED SPENDING PRIORITIES	INCREASE	DECREASE	NO CHANGE
(NOTE: Numbers are rounded to nearest billion.)			
National defense \$ 397	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
International affairs \$ 24 (State Dept., foreign aid)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Natural resources and environment \$ 30	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Transportation \$ 64	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Education \$ 81	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Health \$ 235 (health care services, research, safety)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Social Security \$ 477	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Medicare \$ 235	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Veterans \$ 57	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Energy \$.5	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Agriculture \$ 24	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Medicare Prescription drug benefit \$ 190 (over 10 years)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Extend tax cuts into the future \$ 591 (over 10 years)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

The government is currently facing a \$106 billion deficit. The President's tax cuts contribute to this deficit. In order to balance the budget, we should:

☐ stop implementing new tax cuts

☐ keep tax cuts and live with the deficit

☐ raise taxes

☐ cut spending

If you would like to receive an occasional update by e-mail, please give me **your e-mail** address: _____

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